

Vaccinate Virginia Partner Update

January 24, 2021

The following information is provided to help partners communicate accurate and timely information to constituents. This information is subject to change as Virginia continues to refine the vaccination effort. Visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine for more information.

Key Points:

- **All states rely on the federal government to distribute vaccine doses.** Based on our population, Virginia is currently receiving approximately 105,000 new doses per week toward our goal of vaccinating all 8.5 million Virginians plus out-of-state residents who serve as essential workers in Virginia. The pace of incoming doses is not expected to increase until March.
- **Virginia's primary distribution of doses is allocated by the Virginia Department of Health to Local Health Districts, in proportion to each district's population.** Local Health Districts are expected to determine the most equitable and efficient use of each allocation, leveraging any combination of their own staff and volunteers, hospitals, pharmacies, and individual providers. Additional doses reach some residents of Virginia through separate federal allocations for employees of the U.S. Department of Defense and certain other agencies; the Indian Health Service; and a federal contract with CVS and Walgreens to vaccinate residents of long-term care facilities.
- **Starting tomorrow, all Local Health Districts in Virginia will have moved into [Phase 1b of vaccine eligibility](#).** This means that approximately 50% of Virginia's population is now eligible, including frontline essential workers, people aged 65 years and older, people with high-risk medical conditions identified by the CDC, and people living in correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and migrant labor camps. Other than the healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities in Phase 1a, the Virginians in Phase 1b are at the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19 or serious illness if infected.
- **There are simply not enough doses available yet for everyone who is eligible to receive them.** Virginia is not likely to meet the demand for Phase 1b until March or April.
- **Anyone eligible for Phase 1a or 1b** based on occupation should check with their employer to see if arrangements have already been made, and should otherwise register with the [local health department](#) in the locality where they work. Anyone eligible based on age or medical condition should register with the local health department in the locality where they live. Virginia is reaching out to neighboring states and the District of Columbia to ensure consistency in this approach. Assistance in English, Spanish, and other languages is also available through the VDH Call Center at 877-ASK-VDH3 (877-275-8343).
- **Unfortunately, it may be weeks or longer before vaccination appointments become available for those who have registered.**
- **Anyone who receives a first dose of vaccine will receive the second dose three or four weeks later as appropriate.** Vaccine providers should not hold back their current supply for second doses; they will receive second doses in proportion to the first doses they administer.

Current Statewide Focus Areas:

- Working with Local Health Districts to provide consistent information on their websites and by phone for how eligible individuals can register.
- Working closely with CVS and Walgreens to support their use of allocated vaccine in long-term care facilities as soon as possible, which will help close the gap between available and administered doses.
- Supporting local points of vaccine distribution to ensure that all administered doses have been entered into the Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS). Eliminating the current data entry backlog will provide a more accurate picture of vaccinations in Virginia.
- Adding additional information to the [Vaccine Summary Dashboard](#) soon, to improve transparency around doses provided to vaccinators versus those actually administered.
- Connecting vaccinators who have unused doses with partners who can help set up additional vaccination clinics for eligible individuals.

How Localities Can Help:

- Support Local Health Districts in ensuring that registration information for eligible individuals is easily available through local websites and call centers.
- Emphasize to the public that because approximately 50% of Virginia residents are now eligible to be vaccinated, the limited supply of vaccine from the federal government means it will take *months* to complete Phase 1b unless supply improves.
- Closely coordinate with local health districts to plan smaller vaccination clinics now and larger ones once supply improves. Pooling venues, staff, volunteers, and other resources now will avoid delays later.
- Remind everyone in the community that it is more important than ever to take the same precautions as always: staying home when possible, wearing masks when out, maintaining physical distance from others, washing hands frequently, and other best practices.

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